
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5559 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM REGIONAL SCHOOL CALENDAR.

SUMMARY:

This bill delays for one year, from the school year starting July 1, 2015 to the year starting July 1, 2016, the requirement that each local or regional board of education adopt a uniform regional school calendar that the regional education service center (RESC) for that board developed and approved. By law, each RESC must develop a uniform school calendar by April 1, 2014 to be used by each local and regional board of education in the RESC's service region, and the calendar must be consistent with the guidelines developed under PA 13-247 (see BACKGROUND).

Furthermore, the bill gives a school board an additional year, until the school year starting July 1, 2017, to implement the uniform calendar if it has an existing employee contract that makes implementation of the uniform regional school calendar impossible. (Some contracts include specific vacation periods or professional development dates.) The bill does not indicate how it is determined that contracts make the regional calendar impossible.

The bill creates a new apprenticeship grant program under the Subsidized Training and Employment Program (STEP) to provide grants for small businesses and manufacturers to hire high school and college students.

The bill expands an existing child day care service licensing exemption to apply to any day care service that a municipal agency or department administers rather than only those located in a public school building.

It also makes conforming changes.

*House Amendment "A" adds the provisions regarding (1) the STEP new apprentice program and (2) the licensing exemption for municipally administered child day care services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage for the uniform calendar portion and July 1, 2014 for the new apprentice program and the licensing exemption.

STEP NEW APPRENTICE PROGRAM

The bill creates a "new apprentice" grant program under the STEP to provide grants for small businesses and manufacturers to hire high school and college students. Under the STEP program, the Department of Labor (DOL) provides grants to small businesses to help offset the cost of hiring people who were previously unemployed.

Under the bill a "new apprentice" is a student at a public or private high school, preparatory school, or institution of higher education. It does not include a person employed (1) in Connecticut by a relative at an eligible small business during the previous 12 months or (2) on a temporary or seasonal basis by a retailer that sells goods primarily used for personal, family, or household purposes.

An eligible small business or manufacturer may apply to DOL for a grant to subsidize on-the-job training for a new apprentice. An eligible small business must (1) employ 100 or fewer full-time employees on at least 50% of its working days in the previous 12 months, (2) have operations and be registered in the state, and (3) be in good standing regarding all state and local taxes. An eligible small manufacturer means a business classified as a manufacturer under the North American Industry Classification System that employs 100 or fewer workers on at least 50% of its working days during the preceding 12 months.

Grant Schedule

The bill creates a grant schedule, with a maximum of \$10 per hour for any apprentice, for eligible small businesses or manufacturers as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: New Apprentice Subsidy Schedule

<i>Calendar Days Employed</i>	<i>Grant Amount as Percent of Employee's Training and Compensation</i>
First 30 days	100%*
31 to 90, inclusive	75%
91 to 150, inclusive	50%
151 to 180, inclusive	25%
*Up to a maximum of \$10 per hour.	

Grants are cancelled when the new apprentice leaves his or her apprenticeship with the eligible small business or manufacturer.

BACKGROUND

Uniform Regional School Calendar Task Force and Guidelines

A 2013 law established a task force to develop regional uniform school calendar guidelines that had to meet the following requirements:

1. at least 180 days of sessions in a school year (as required by existing law);
2. a uniform start date;
3. uniform days for statutorily required professional development and in-service training for certified employees; and
4. up to three uniform school vacation periods during each school year, of which up to two must be one-week vacations and one must be during the summer (PA 13-247, §321).

The task force completed its report and guidelines in January 2014. The guidelines include:

1. a common start date for students of the last Wednesday in August, with a three-day flexible window before or after that Wednesday;
2. Election Day in November to be a professional development day

when no students attend school; and

3. five flexible days for individual district needs.

RESCs

Each of the six RESCs in the state serves a different geographical region. The RESCs provide various services to local and regional boards of education.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 26 Nay 7 (03/19/2014)